

## *Contact Information*

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# *Managing A Vital Resource*



## *Introduction*

Shortly after North Dakota achieved statehood, it became apparent that there was a need to more systematically manage and develop the state's valuable water resources. In response, the North Dakota Legislature created the Office of the State Engineer in 1905 with the passage of the State Irrigation Code. Initially, the role of the State Engineer was to regulate the allocation of water, manage drainage, and promote the development of irrigation.

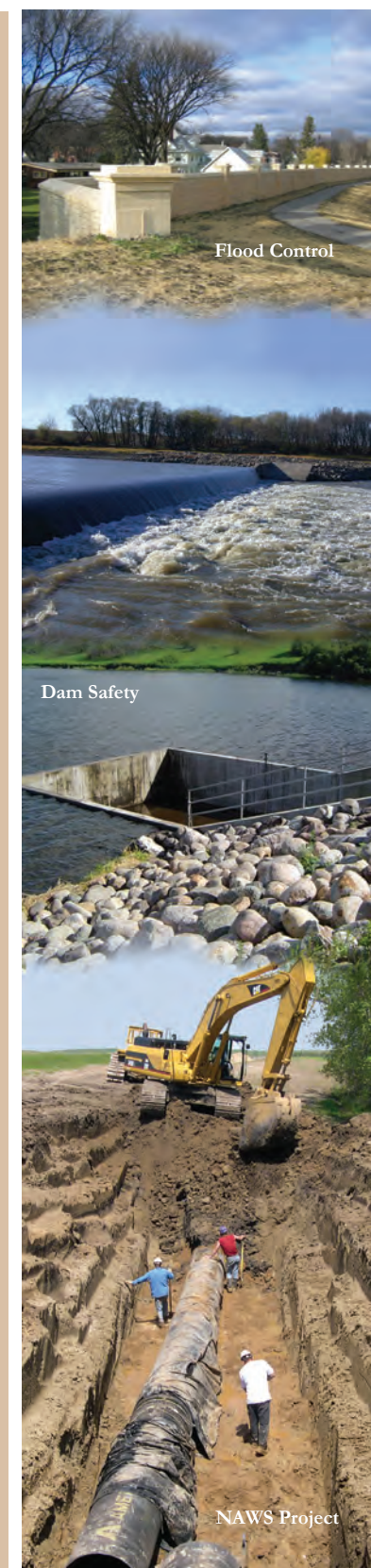
Years later, following the 1930s drought, the North Dakota Legislature recognized the need for a state agency with broader powers and responsibility in water project development. As such, the North Dakota State Water Conservation Commission (which later became the Water Commission) was established in 1937. This new agency was given the authority to investigate, plan, construct and develop much-needed water projects, and it provided a clearly defined mechanism to financially support those efforts throughout North Dakota.

Today, all of the original mandates of the State Engineer and Water Commission remain, but several others have been added to address the contemporary water management needs of the state. The purpose of this brochure is to provide an overview of those responsibilities, and to demonstrate the partnership that has been forged between the Office of the State Engineer and Water Commission in protecting the public's interest in water, while enhancing opportunities for social and economic growth.

## *Agency Composition*

The State Water Commission consists of the Governor, who serves as chairman, the Commissioner of Agriculture as an ex-officio member, and seven members appointed by the Governor to provide regional representation. The seven appointed members serve six-year, overlapping terms.

The Commission appoints the State Engineer who serves as their Secretary and Chief Engineer. That individual then employs a staff to accomplish the mission of the Water Commission— "to improve the quality of life and strengthen the economy of North Dakota by managing the water resources of the state for the benefit of its people."







## *Vision*

Present and future generations of North Dakotans will enjoy an adequate supply of good quality water for people, agriculture, industry, and fish and wildlife; Missouri River water will be put to beneficial use through its distribution across the state to meet ever increasing water supply and quality needs; and successful management and development of North Dakota's water resources will ensure health, safety, and prosperity, and balance the needs of generations to come.

## *Agency Goals*

- To regulate the use of water resources for the future welfare and prosperity of the people of North Dakota.
- To develop water resources for the future welfare and prosperity of the people of North Dakota.
- To manage water resources for the future welfare and prosperity of the people of North Dakota.
- To educate the public regarding the nature and occurrence of North Dakota's water resources.
- To collect, manage, and distribute information to facilitate improved management of North Dakota's water resources.
- To conduct research into the processes affecting the hydrologic cycle to improve the management of North Dakota's water resources.

## *Organization*

Achievement of the agency's goals requires a staff of diverse capabilities. Staff expertise has been divided into five divisions, with specific tasks.

The Administrative Support and Accounting Division provides support services for the agency, including personnel administration, accounting, purchasing, record keeping, library services, and information technology.

The Planning and Education Division develops and maintains the State Water Management Plan and the agency Strategic Plan; manages the agency's information and education programs; and represents the Commission on various local and regional planning organizations and technical groups.

The Water Development Division is responsible for project engineering, construction, and maintenance; sovereign land management; Missouri River management; Municipal Rural & Industrial (MR&I) program administration; Southwest Pipeline and Northwest Area Water Supply project management; dam safety; floodplain management; and the processing of dam, dike, and drainage permits.

The Water Appropriations Division is responsible for the processing of water permit applications; water rights evaluations; water resource management within the framework of the Appropriations Doctrine; collection and dissemination of hydrologic data; water supply and water resource investigations; and supporting state and local economic development activities.

The Atmospheric Resource Board, which has been a division of the State Water Commission since 1981, is responsible for the administration of cloud seeding activities in the state, weather modification research and development, and weather-related data collection.

## *Cooperation*

Management of water affects many disciplines and levels of government. Consequently, the Water Commission and State Engineer routinely work together. However, their roles are distinctly different, where the Office of the State Engineer has regulatory functions, and the Water Commission is more involved in water development. Both the State Engineer and Water Commission work with other agencies to develop and operate projects and programs impacting water management in North Dakota.

## *Data Services*

The Water Commission and State Engineer have a wealth of water-related information that is accessed by everyone from water management professionals to the general public. An excellent source of readily available information is the agency website, which can be found at <http://swc.nd.gov>. The website contains a broad spectrum of information from general project and program details, to technical databases. Examples of information available on the Water Commission and State Engineer website include, but are not limited to:

- Government Land Office Plats
- Survey horizontal and vertical controls
- Various ground-water studies
- Agency and regional water management planning reports
- Well and site location data
- Well and test hole lithologic data
- Well chemistry data
- Water level data
- Growing season rainfall and hail data
- Water permit data
- Drainage permit data
- Stream flow data
- Construction permit data
- Retention structure data
- Digital map data